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INFO RUEHBK/AMEMBASSY BANGKOK 6543
RUEHHI/AMEMBASSY HANOI 2058
RUEHPF/AMEMBASSY PHNOM PENH 0291
RUEHGO/AMEMBASSY RANGOON 2451
RUEHKO/AMEMBASSY TOKYO 2194
RUEHVN/AMEMBASSY VIENTIANE 1119

UNCLAS SEOUL 000552

SIPDIS

SENSITIVE
SIPDIS

PLEASE PASS TO EAP/MLS

E.O. 12958: N/A
TAGS: [OTRA](#) [KS](#) [TH](#) [BM](#) [LAS](#) [VM](#) [CB](#) [JA](#)
SUBJECT: COUNTRY CLEARANCE FOR EAP/MLS DIRECTOR RAPSON

REF: STATE 20801

¶1. (U) Embassy Seoul warmly welcomes and grants country clearance for the March 9-11, 2007 official visit to Seoul by EAP/MLS Director Robert Rapson. A notional schedule will follow separately.

CONTACT INFORMATION

¶2. (U) Control officer for the visit is Political Officer Andrew Bennett.

Office telephone: (82)(2) 397-4372
Embassy operator: (82)(2) 397-4114 then press "0"
Cell phone: (82)(10) 6480-4372
Fax number: (82)(2) 733-4791
Unclassified email: bennettao@state.gov

SIPDIS
SIPTNet email: bennettao@state.sgov.gov

LODGING

¶3. (U) Embassy has reserved a room at the Seoul Plaza Hotel for the nights of March 9-10, 2007 at per diem rates, including early check-in on March 9 and special upgrade to business room. The reservation confirmation number is ¶270679. The hotel phone number is (82-2) 771-2200. Breakfast, Lounge Floor, and fitness access are included in the rate. Cancellation policy is 24 hours prior to arrival to avoid one-night penalty.

TRAVELERS NOTE

¶4. (U) All official travelers must possess a Korean visa to enter the country. Travelers may contact the nearest Korean consulate/embassy to obtain a visa.

¶5. (U) An airport tax of KRW27,000 (approximately USD27) is usually included in the cost of the ticket. Upon departure, diplomatic passport holders may claim reimbursement at the tax refund center located near the duty-free shops beyond the security check area.

TRANSPORTATION

¶16. (U) Per Embassy policy, we cannot meet official visitors on arrival unless they hold the rank of Ambassador, Deputy Assistant Secretary, and above. Transportation from Incheon International Airport into the heart of the city is readily available by taxi. An airport/hotel shuttle (KAL limousine) also runs every 30 minutes during the day to first class hotels downtown for KRW13,000 (approximately USD13). Availability may be limited, however, late in the evening.

CELL PHONES

¶17. (U) Please be advised that not all cell phones work in Korea. Travelers must first check with their service provider. Blackberrys are likewise unusable in Korea.

THREAT ADVISORY

¶18. (U) Americans in Seoul are subject to worldwide threat from international terrorists, although we have no information to suggest any specific terrorists threats directed at Americans here. Political demonstrations occur frequently in Seoul, and are occasionally anti-American. Americans can minimize personal risk by staying away from demonstrations and by avoiding confrontation or altercations with protesters. While relatively infrequent by U.S. standards, street crime does occur. Most reported crimes involve pickpocketing in tourist areas and are predominantly non-violent in nature. The security precautions a person would take in any large city are appropriate throughout South Korea. Police are considered capable and well trained. Seoul metropolitan authorities staff English-speaking personnel 24 hours daily to handle local emergencies. Telephone numbers are as follows: 112 police emergency, 119 fire & ambulance.

¶19. (SBU) One must assume that hotel rooms, telephones, cellular phones, and fax machines may be monitored. Official travelers should ensure that hard-copy and electronic sensitive information is not left in hotel rooms. As a precautionary measure, visitors are advised NOT to discuss sensitive or classified information in uncontrolled areas. Computers, to include laptops and PDAs, are NOT allowed in the Embassy except with prior clearance/permission from the RSO office.

OTHER INFO

¶10. (U) For comprehensive information on South and North Korean politics and economies, please reference the Embassy's new classified website at <http://www.state.sgov.gov>.

VERSHBOW